



BRIEFING: October 14, 2013 BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM #2

TO: Chairman Richard and Board Members

FROM: Michelle Boehm, Southern California Regional Director

DATE: October 14, 2013

RE: Status Report on Southern California Project Sections

Background

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide a status update regarding the development of the Southern California high-speed rail project sections (Bakersfield to Palmdale, Palmdale to Los Angeles, Los Angeles to Anaheim, and Los Angeles to San Diego) and to provide an overview of project elements under consideration going forward.

Discussion

Over the course of the past year, previously completed Alternative Analysis (AA) documents for all Southern California Sections have been under review for consistency factors including:

- The 2012 Business Plan and Senate Bill 1029 (SB 1029)
- Previously recorded stakeholder feedback
- Coordination with local/regional plans and priorities
- New transportation projects in planning and design
- Lessons learned during the Merced to Fresno and Fresno to Bakersfield Section Project level environmental process

During this time, we reviewed existing alignments and clarified stakeholder comments where required. This process will ultimately result in Supplemental Alternative Analysis (SAA) for each of the Southern California project sections. In general, an alternatives analysis document identifies the range of potentially feasible and practicable alternatives for further analysis and consideration through the Project level environmental process. This effort is currently underway and next steps include continuing our comprehensive stakeholder outreach process.

Also underway in Southern California is continued work on the Book End projects. Developed as a joint effort between the Authority, Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), Metrolink, San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), Anaheim, Riverside County Transportation

Commission (RCTC), and San Bernardino Association of Governments (SANBAG), the Book End projects represent early investments that clear the way for high-speed rail by completing required local infrastructure projects early in order to minimize local impacts during construction of the high-speed rail system. Described in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Southern California partner agencies noted above, and funded by SB 1029, the list of projects was developed by the local MOU participants and meets numerous criteria including short and long term utility, high-speed rail utility, and no throw-away costs. This MOU, approved by the Board in 2012, represents a partnership between the Authority and the Southern California transportation agencies. We expect to bring a further, and hopefully final, SAA to the Board in the spring or summer of 2014.

Work on several connectivity projects authorized by SB 1029 is also commencing. Connectivity projects in the region include:

- **Metro Regional Rail Connector**
SB 1029 provides \$115 million to help construct a 2-mile light rail connection among Metro Gold, Metro Blue and Metro Exposition light rail transit systems through downtown Los Angeles to provide a one-seat ride from throughout the County to Union Station and the high-speed rail system. SB 1029 helps leverage \$1.4 billion in funding for this project.
- **Metrolink New or Improved Locomotives/Cars**
SB 1029 provides \$89 million to repower and/or purchase 20 to 30 higher horsepower locomotives, and recondition and improve passenger cars. The state investment of \$89 million will help leverage a total investment of \$203 million for this purpose. Metrolink also received approximately \$35 million for advanced signaling system work from Proposition 1A in previous appropriations.
- **San Diego Metropolitan Transit System Blue Line Light Rail Improvements**
SB 1029 provides \$58 million to rehabilitate grade crossings, track, and switches and ties, add track work and signaling, and raise platforms to accommodate low floor vehicles to allow for reduced headway and improved reliability. This investment helps bring a total investment of \$152 million to update and modernize San Diego's Blue Line light rail system.
- **San Diego North County Transit District Advanced Signaling System**
SB 1029 adds \$7.3 million to a previously appropriated \$10.5 million of Proposition 1A funds to a Positive Train Control project for the North County Transit District in the San Diego Area. The funds are to build an advanced signaling system to track the location of trains in order to avoid collisions. The state investment will help bring the total investment in this project to \$60 million.

Bakersfield to Palmdale Section

Existing documentation for the Bakersfield to Palmdale Section includes:

- The September 2010 Preliminary Alternative Analysis (PAA) which included preliminary planning, environmental, and engineering information while also identifying possible alignment alternatives.

- The February 2012 Supplemental Alternative Analysis (SAA), which presented updates to the 2010 PAA mentioned above. The 2012 SAA focused on addressing stakeholder comments and reducing environmental impacts as well as project costs.

Since the release of the 2012 SAA, the Authority released the 2012 Business Plan which introduced the Initial Operating Segment (IOS) describing high-speed operation from the Central Valley to the San Fernando Valley as well as enhanced network integration with existing passenger rail services. These project elements, along with stakeholder feedback, have served as the basis for a comprehensive review of the previous SAA alternatives to ensure consistency and verify integration with new projects in the planning process. Notable new projects that impact the Bakersfield to Palmdale project section planning process include:

- The High Desert Corridor in the Antelope Valley
- A Freight Rail Double Track project through the Tehachapi Mountains
- The continued expansion of the clean energy production capacity in the northern end of the Antelope Valley
- Planned development throughout the corridor

In addition, potential sites for a combined Terminal Storage Maintenance Facility (TSMF) and Maintenance of Infrastructure Facility (MOIF) within the Bakersfield to Palmdale Section are under evaluation.

The Bakersfield to Palmdale Project Section Team is currently refining the alternatives to address these project elements as well as specific stakeholder concerns.

Palmdale to Los Angeles Section

Existing documentation for the Palmdale to Los Angeles Section includes:

- The July 2010 PAA that defined an initial set of alignment alternatives for the Palmdale to Los Angeles section.
- The March 2011 SAA that reevaluated the subsections from Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) to Sylmar
- The April 2012 SAA that focused solely on the Sylmar to Palmdale subsection and broke it into two subsections, named Santa Clarita and Palmdale.

Since the release of the 2012 SAA, the Authority released the 2012 Business Plan which introduced the Initial Operating Segment (IOS) describing high-speed operation from the Central Valley to the San Fernando Valley and enhanced network integration with existing passenger rail services. These elements, along with stakeholder feedback, have served as the basis for a comprehensive review of the previous SAA alternatives to ensure consistency and verify integration with new projects in the planning process. Notable new projects in the planning process that impact the Palmdale to Los Angeles Section include:

- The High Desert Corridor in the Antelope Valley
- Planned development in the Antelope Valley and adjacent to the Burbank Airport

The refinement process includes: 1) reviewing alternatives suggested by stakeholders during the public outreach process; and, 2) removing alternatives that have characteristics or impacts that are not consistent with the vision, goals, and operational characteristics required to implement a successful project as the project itself and surrounding circumstances have evolved.

The following project elements in the Palmdale to Los Angeles section are currently under evaluation:

- In Palmdale, the Palmdale Station location is being evaluated in light of the 2012 Business Plan, as well as the High Desert Corridor (HDC) project's potential high-speed rail connection to Victorville and Las Vegas. Planned local and regional investments, HDC plans, and multimodal connectivity now all align only at the Palmdale Transportation Center.
- In the Acton/Agua Dulce area, alternatives that address stakeholder concerns as well as design constraints are being evaluated in order to minimize impacts to schools, natural resources, and the community.
- In the Santa Clarita area, alternatives that address stakeholder concerns as well as design constraints are being evaluated in order to minimize impacts to schools, natural resources, planned development, and the community.
- In the San Fernando Valley (SFV), the current alignment options share the existing rail corridor with Metrolink and freight trains. The SFV corridor is very complex, and the right of way is constrained by dense urban development. The team is evaluating the SFV corridor in partnership with Metro, the City of Los Angeles, the City of Burbank, and others to make sure the alignment incorporates all planned local and regional investments.
- Also in the San Fernando Valley (SFV), station locations are under evaluation. This evaluation includes careful consideration of planned local and regional investments, multimodal connectivity, corridor constraints, and the requirements of an end of the line station consistent with the IOS approach described in the 2012 Business Plan. Currently a Burbank/Buena Vista location appears to meet these objectives.
- At Los Angeles Union Station, staff is collaborating with the Metro Union Station Master Plan Team to identify concepts that will accommodate the arrival of high-speed rail and address the complex set of challenges the constrained site presents.

The Palmdale to Los Angeles Project Section Team is currently refining the alternatives to address these project elements as well as specific stakeholder input.

Los Angeles to Anaheim Section

Existing documentation for the Los Angeles to Anaheim Section includes:

- The April 2009 Draft AA that recommended that the Dedicated high-speed rail Alternative be carried forward into Draft Project level environmental documents and Preliminary Engineering design.
- The July 2010 SAA updated the Draft AA Report submitted in April 2009. Modifications were made to the alternatives and design options described in the Draft AA Report as coordination with local cities and agencies progressed.

Since the release of the 2010 SAA, the Authority released the 2012 Business Plan which introduced the Initial Operating Segment (IOS) describing high-speed operation from the Central Valley to the San Fernando Valley and enhanced network integration with existing passenger rail services. These elements, along with stakeholder feedback, have served as the basis for a comprehensive review of the previous SAA alternatives to ensure consistency and verify integration with new projects in the planning process. Specific project elements under review for this Section include:

- High-speed rail station locations
- Right-of-Way impacts along this highly constrained urban corridor and opportunities to reduce the overall high-speed rail footprint
- Integration with LOSSAN Pacific Surfliner Service as well as Metrolink Service

The Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section Team is currently refining the alternatives to address these project elements as well as specific stakeholder concerns.

Los Angeles to San Diego Section

Existing documentation for the Los Angeles to San Diego Section includes:

- The March 2011 Preliminary Alternatives Analysis (PAA) for the Los Angeles to San Diego Section via the Inland Empire.

Since March 2011, the team has been addressing the comments received as part of the PAA outreach effort and is preparing a Section Refinement Report to document the comments and possible concepts for addressing concerns. This effort has led to the identification of eighteen individual areas along the various corridors where refinements are required to address specific concerns voiced by stakeholders. A draft of this document is nearing completion.

Work on the Los Angeles to San Diego section is conducted in close coordination with the Southern California Inland Corridor Group (SOCAL ICG). The SOCAL ICG includes a variety of local transportation and planning agencies that have come together to advance the development of this Phase II Corridor. A testament to the importance of the Los Angeles to San Diego Section to the region, the SOCAL ICG agreement is being renewed and the group continues to focus on moving this Section forward.

Staff will be seeking Board Approval to bring on a new Regional Consultant Team to continue working with the SOCAL ICG as this Section moves forward.

In sum, staff is working diligently to prepare for completion of the IOS. This includes overseeing the Book End and Connectivity projects that will pave the way for high-speed rail service, provide immediate transportation benefits, and improve long-term operations of high-speed rail in California. Thanks to the appropriations contained in SB 1029, the coming years will see many changes to Southern California's mass transit systems. We will continue to update the Board regularly on this progress.

Recommendations

No action by the Board is requested, as this is an informational item only.